

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8312

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

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FODAG

PASS USDA FOR SECRETARY BERGLAND

LONDON FOR HATHAWAY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FAO, OCON

SUBJ: 19TH FAO CONFERENCE - FAO DG ISSUES SPECIAL STATEMENT ON
FORTHCOMING FAO CONFERENCE SESSION

REF : ROME 17934

FODAG IS TRANSMITTING HERewith THE TEXT OF A PRESS CONFERENCE
THAT FAO DG SAOUMA GAVE ON NOVEMBER 3. SAOUMA'S STATEMENT
COVERS ISSUES HE HOPES 19TH SESSION OF FAO CONFE-
RENCE WILL TREAT AND SUBJECTS HE HOPES MINISTERS WILL
DISCUSS IN THEIR 20-MINUTE STATEMENTS. NOTE REFERENCES
TO AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT., U.S. SET-ASIDE PROGRAM, AND HUMAN
RIGHTS.

BEGIN TEXT:

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I AM ISSUING A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS A FEW DAYS AHEAD OF THE
FORTHCOMING SESSION OF THE FAO CONFERENCE BECAUSE OF PUBLIC
INTEREST IN THE MAIN WORLD ISSUES WHICH IT WILL EITHER DISCUSS
OR WHICH WILL FORM THE BACKGROUND FOR ITS DISCUSSIONS.

THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOW BEING RAISED ON ALL SIDES,
BUT AT PRESENT IT IS BEING DISCUSSED MAINLY IN POLITICAL TERMS.

THERE ARE OTHER, FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS OF AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NATURE. FREEDOM FROM HUNGER IS PROBABLY THE MOST BASIC HUMAN RIGHT OF ALL. AND OVER VAST AREAS OF THE GLOBE THERE ARE MILLIONS OF HUNGRY AND MALNOURISHED MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS LACK THE BASIC NEEDS WHICH, BESIDES FOOD, INCLUDE ADEQUATE SHELTER AND CLOTHING AND SAFE WATER TO DRINK.

THIS IS THE CONTEXT NOT ONLY OF THE FAO CONFERENCE BUT ALSO OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS TO BE HELD IN ROME IN JULY 1979 AND FOR WHICH THIS CONFERENCE SESSION WILL NOT ONLY REVIEW THE ARRANGEMENTS BUT ALSO, I HOPE, PROVIDE POWERFUL STIMULUS. THIS WORLD CONFERENCE HAS TO BE WELL PREPARED. I WANT TO AVOID CONFRONTATION, RHETORIC AND CONFUSION. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD, AT THIS MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EVENT LESS THAN TWO YEARS AWAY, PLEDGE THEMSELVES TO REAL AND PRACTICAL ACTION AGAINST THE IMMENSE AND SPREADING FLOOD OF ABSOLUTE POVERTY IN THE RURAL AREAS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH THREATENS TO OVERWHELM THEM.

IT IS NO USE TELLING A STARVING MAN TO BE SELF-RELIANT BUT GOVERNMENTS OF THE THIRD WORLD HAVE GOT TO BE MUCH MORE SELF-RELIANT AND DO MUCH MORE TO MOBILIZE THEIR OWN RURAL PEOPLE,
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WHO HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

HERE NO-ONE CAN FAIL TO BE IMPRESSED BY THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG, WHO HAS DIED SINCE THE LAST FAO CONFERENCE SESSION. BY BRINGING 800 MILLION PEOPLE TO WORK TOGETHER WITH AGRICULTURE AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE ECONOMY, HE MADE POSSIBLE A SITUATION IN WHICH ALL COULD BE FED AND THEIR OTHER BASIC NEEDS MET. IT IS AN UNPARALLELED ACHIEVEMENT.

TURNING TO EVENTS ON THE BROADER INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SCENE IN THE LAST TWO YEARS WHICH WILL INFLUENCE DISCUSSIONS AT THIS SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE, I SHOULD MAKE MENTION OF THE SO-CALLED NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE IN PARIS. PROGRESS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER HAS BEEN DEPLORABLY SLIGHT. THE PARIS CONFERENCE FARED LITTLE BETTER. HOWEVER, THE PART OF ITS REPORT ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REFLECTED A CERTAIN MEASURE OF AGREEMENT AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS.

THERE ARE SOME CONCRETE PROPOSALS WHICH SHOULD BE FOLLOWED UP, NOTABLY THE QUESTION OF INCREASED SUPPORT FOR FAO'S SEED IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

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THIS PROGRAMME, NOW FOUR YEARS OLD, IS FOR BUILDING UP
NATIONAL SEED INDUSTRIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.
APART FROM THE ANORMOUS VALUE OF THESE IN
IMPROVING CROP PRODUCTION, THE PROGRAMME HAS TWO OTHER INHERENT
ADVANTAGES. IT IS EASILY ASSOCIATED WITH POSSIBILITIES FOR
TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, A GROWING
NEW DIMENSION ON THE WORLD DEVELOPMENT SCENE AND THE SUBJECT FOR
A MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE NEXT YEAR IN ARGENTINA.
IT ALSO ENABLES FAO TO WORK CLOSELY, CONTINUOUSLY AND INCREASINGLY
WITH THE RELEVANT NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THOSE COUNTRIES,
HELPING THEM TO ENLARGE AND ENHANCE THEIR OWN CAPACITY.
THAT IS THE MAIN AND ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION
ACTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE WAS
SUFFICIENTLY IMPRESSED BY THE POTENTIAL OF THIS PROGRAMME TO
AGREE THAT AT LEAST \$20 MMILLION IN
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO IT.

ANOTHER VITAL FAO INITIATIVE AT THIS TIME WHICH HAS RECEIVED
THE SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS A CAMPAIGN AGAINST
FOOD LOSSES FOR WHICH A SPECIAL FUND HAS BEEN
PROPOSED. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CAMPAIGN CAN BE GAUGED FROM THE
FACT THAT, IF HALF THE ESTIMATED POST-HARVEST LOSSES IN THE WORLD
WERE ELIMINATED, THAT WOULD BE THE EQUI-
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VALENT OF ABOUT HALF THE AMOUNT OF GRAINS THAT THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE LIKELY TO NEED TO IMPORT IN 1985. THE SAVINGS IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE COULD BE AT LEAST \$7,500 MILLION A YEAR.

AN IMPORTANT ISSUE BEFORE THIS CONFERENCE SESSION WILL BE INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE, AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS. THIS IS THE SUBJECT TO WHICH THE FAO COUNCIL HAS INVITED MINISTERS AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS TO DEVOTE PARTICULAR ATTENTION IN THEIR MAIN STATEMENTS IN PLENARY. IT ALSO FORMS ONE OF THE MAIN PRIORITIES OF FAO'S NEW POLICY AS PROPOSED BY ME AND APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL IN JULY 1976. AS WAS RECOGNIZED BY THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE THREE YEARS AGO NOW, THE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM CANNOT BE SOLVED WITHOUT A TREMENDOUS INCREASE IN PRODUCTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. AND THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A MASSIVE INCREASE IN AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT IN THOSE COUNTRIES. THERE IS SOME ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE DRAWN FROM THE IMMINENT CREATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD).

AS USUAL, THE CONFERENCE WILL REVIEW THE WORLD FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SITUATION. IT WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO WITH LESS IMMEDIATE ANXIETY THAN ON RECENT OCCASIONS IN THE PAST, BECAUSE OF THE GENERALLY GOOD HARVESTS OF THE LAST THREE YEARS. BUT THE LONGER-TERM PRODUCTION OUTLOOK IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES REMAINS GRAVE. EVEN THE SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK IN SOME AREAS SUCH AS THE SAHEL IS DISTURBING. THE WORLD CANNOT AFFORD TO RELAX ITS EFFORTS FOR ONE MOMENT, BUT, NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT THERE ARE STILL MILLIONS OF HUNGRY PEOPLE, I HAVE NOT INDULGED IN FACILE DENUNCIATION OF THE RECENT CHANGE IN U.S. GRAIN PRODUCTION POLICY. THE PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION, TRADE AND CONSUMPTION ARE TOO COMPLEX TO JUSTIFY SIMPLISTIC APPROCHES, AND THERE IS AT LEAST A POSITIVE GAIN IN

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THAT AN ELEMENT OF U.S. STOCKS HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD RESERVES.

THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE FAO CONFERENCE WILL ADMIT SEVEN NEW MEMBER COUNTRIES TO THE ORGANIZATION. THESE ARE ANGOLA, COMOROS, DJIBOUTI, THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA, MOZAMBIQUE, SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE, AND SEYCHELLES. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ONE VERY IMPORTANT COUNTRY WHICH WILL NOT BE PRESENT SINCE, AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS OF FAO'S EXISTENCE, IT STILL HAS NOT EXERCISED ITS RIGHT TO MEMBERSHIP. THIS IS THE SOVIET UNION.

AS I HAVE INDICATED, THIS SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE WILL BE CONCERNED WITH A NUMBER OF MATTERS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE AT THIS JUNCTURE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. I AM HOPING FOR SOME

CONCRETE DECISIONS, A REAL ADVANCE IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERA-
TION. I BELIEVE WE CAN GET THIS IN A SPIRIT
OF CONCILIATION AND COUNSENSUS, SHOWING RESPECT FOR THE
SMALL AS WELL AS THE POWERFUL, THE MINORITY AS
WELL AS THE MAJORITY. I AM MALLING ON THE CONFERENCE TO
SHOW THIS SPIRIT IN ITS DELIBERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.
END TEXT.HOLMES

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